

A MORE STRATEGIC FOCUS

countries' priority needs and Canada's ability to make the greatest difference. This will be done in close coordination with other partners, including donor agencies.

Promoting Good Governance

Particularly through Canada Corps, and through other programming channels, Canada will assist countries to build the conditions for secure, equitable development by promoting good governance, focusing Canadian efforts on democratization, human rights, the rule of law, public-sector capacity building, and conflict prevention.

Sustainable poverty reduction requires security and sound governance structures and processes. Well-governed societies establish the legal and regulatory frameworks and norms required for private sector investment and economic growth. They also establish the institutions, systems and practices that ensure that basic services such as health and education are truly responsive to local needs and accountable to local people for their performance. Sound governance is a fundamental prerequisite for any of the MDGs to be achieved in a sustainable manner.

An important feature of the Monterrey Consensus, and of emerging trends in development more generally, has been the increased focus that developing countries themselves have put on the importance of clean, transparent and accountable governance. For example, the African Union's New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) lists as the first of its eight founding principles,

"The best protection for human security is . . . the building of national justice systems as part of the building of an international justice system for the 21st century organized around democratic institutions and rights-protecting instruments, including Charters of Rights, protection of minorities, an independent judiciary, a free press, protection of human rights monitors, transparency, accountability, and responsible government . . ."

— The Honourable Irwin Cotler,
Minister of Justice, January 17, 2005

"Good governance as a basic requirement for peace, security and sustainable political and socio-economic development." In most of the developing countries which could be considered as potential long-term development partners for Canada (criteria for which are listed in the ensuing section on country concentration), governance-related programming has been identified as one of a limited number of high-priority sectors for development cooperation.

Canada's commitment to tolerance and multiculturalism, to a federal system that accommodates diversity, to strong public institutions and to a vibrant civil society, makes Canadians well suited to supporting developing countries' efforts to improve their governance. In particular, Canada has the following: a broad base of experience with democratic parties, elections and legislatures; a demonstrated commitment to international human rights norms and standards; credible human rights institutions and non-governmental organizations (NGOs); gender equality expertise in the formulation of laws and policies; experience and capacity in child protection; a dual common-law/civil-code legal system, with a strong international reputation for work in legal and judicial reform; strong experience and reputation in peacebuilding and conflict prevention; and environmental and natural resource expertise in the formulation of laws, policies and environmental assessment practices.

A villager in Bocolo, Timor-Leste, takes part in a mock election set up to reassure voters that, on election day, their ballots will be cast in secret without fear of reprisals.



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